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ABSTRACT

This study examined the job satisfaction of female Venezuelan faculty members in their teaching, research and service functions. Using the Faculty Satisfaction Questionnaire, the study compared the responses of 107 full-time males and 100 full-time females at seven Venezuelan teacher colleges. Findings revealed: (1) that teaching as a role function in academia satisfies full-time women as well as men; (2) that research satisfaction differences between female and male faculty were not significant; and (3) that service satisfaction in female faculty did not differ from males. This contradicts the common belief that teaching is a primary role for female faculty and that research is more satisfying to male faculty. Included are four tables and 20 references. (JB)

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SATISFYING TO VENEZUELAN FACULTY WOMEN?

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ABSTRACT

Teaching, Research, and Service: Are These Role Functions Satisfying To Venezuelan Faculty Women?

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The study examined faculty satisfaction with their role functions of teaching, research, and service. This paper compares responses from full-time male (N=107) and female (N=100) faculty members of seven Venezuelan teacher colleges. Data were collected using the Faculty Satisfaction Questionnaire (FSQ) which was developed to obtain perceptions regarding faculty traditional role functions of teaching, research, and service. Items included in the FSQ provided evidence of the validity and reliability of the measures (teaching 11 items $r = .76$; research 9 items $r = .86$; and service 9 items $r = .83$).

Findings revealed that (1) teaching as a role function in academia satisfies full-time faculty women as well as full-time faculty men; (2) research satisfaction differences between female and male full-time faculty were found not significant at .05 alpha level; and (3) service satisfaction in female faculty did not differ from male faculty. In all three cases, it was hypothesized that full-time female faculty would be as satisfied as male full-time faculty in performing their role functions of teaching, research, and service.

This study is significant to the literature of higher education in Latin American countries, and particularly to Venezuelan higher education faculty. It has been a common belief that the role function of teaching is a primary role for female faculty and that research is more satisfying to male faculty. Service continues to lack an appropriate definition.

This research led to the conclusion that women, as well as men academicians, respond to their satisfaction with their role functions identically. No significant differences were noted in the reported satisfaction levels between these two groups of professors.

The relative importance on teaching and research, and service, is a re-heated debate in academia with a new direction added. Gender emerges as a novel argument in this discussion. Then, the questions that would govern this educational dialectic include: Are faculty females more inclined toward a specific role functions than faculty males? or Is teaching, research, or service more attractive to a particular gender? All answers may be either positive or negative. What appears to be valid point is that faculty, regardless of sex, have expressed preferences for some aspects of their role functions. While examining the literature related to satisfaction in higher education professors it was found that teaching itself (i.e. classroom planning, evaluation strategies, content area, instructional techniques, etc.) is commonly a basis of satisfaction (Bowen & Schuster, 1986; Boyer, 1987; Clark, 1985; Cross, 1977; McKeachie, 1982). Also, research is perceived as the academic role of the professoriate (Boberg & Blackburn, 1983; Ladd, 1979). Teaching and research are generally reported as the most satisfying elements of the academic work (Pearson & Seiler, 1983).

Although the three role functions of teaching, research, and service are part of any academic environment, little exploration has taken place on the impact of satisfaction as it interacts with gender on these functions. This issue seems particularly salient given the structures in higher education which result in organizations in which males dominate the scene. Research supports the notion that, in general, females are less satisfied in their academic work than men (Armour, Fuhrman, & Wergin, 1990). However, in respect to a specific role function as teaching, for instance, faculty women are more satisfied than men (Armour et al., 1990; Cliff, 1975). The literature often reports that satisfaction from teaching as a professional career has a gender relationship. Overall, satisfaction in academia is gender-related (Balazadeh, 1981; Carleo, 1989; Grahn, Khan, & Kroll, 1982; Hill, 1987; Karoonlanjakorn, 1986; Sprague, 1974).

Regarding service, little research has examined it as a faculty function. Woodrow (1978) indicated that service activities may not act as a satisfier to faculty unless the accomplishments of the programs are

recognized for promotion and tenure. Research in the area of gender versus service is almost unknown.

Setting of the Problem

In specific organizations, colleges and universities, for example, faculty as a group develop their own unique culture from every other culture, including those who share similar reasons for existence. Venezuelan higher education institutions are good examples. Venezuela, as any other Latin American society, posits in the public and private organizations specific behaviors and patterns which are reinforced from generation to generation. In this culture, male and female populations model certain roles and behaviors that were inherited and transmitted from white European, Africans, and Caribbean Indians. The merging individuals sustained the family as the center or cell of the society. It needs to be understood family refers to a family extended through generations, sibling, and aunt-uncle relationships. Even though males have emerged as the visible dominant agents, it is the females who have carried the responsibility of maintaining, directing, controlling, and supervising the complex family relationships. This

characteristic of the society has influenced a great deal the current status of the women in Venezuela. Women are considered decisive and the critical element of the national life.

What seems to be consistent and similar to other societies is that education teaching has been the career choice for women. This is also true in Venezuela. According to the Ministry of Education (1989), higher education institutions are equated in the number of female and male educators, in the socio-economic benefits they receive, and in the administrative positions held. However, in 1990, J. Serafin, studying a sample of 69 college administrators, found that only 15% of these positions were held by faculty women. Very much is said about this clear data conflict, but little has been written or researched. In this sense, this study offers evidence that may bring informative benefits to the Venezuelan system in particular and to the larger global society in which all women must function.

Research Procedures

The data used for this study are part of a set collected using the Faculty Satisfaction Questionnaire, Spanish version, developed by the researcher. The instrument was designed to provide informational data on faculty of seven Venezuelan teacher colleges in respect to their role functions of teaching, research, and service. The survey consists of 36 items distributed over four primary areas:

- I. Teaching Statements (11 items)
- II. Research Statements (9 items)
- III. Service Statements (9 items)
- IV. Personal and Professional Data (8 items)

Two-hundred-seven full-time faculty members responded to the FSQ. Two capital colleges (389 full-time faculty), three state colleges (798 full-time faculty), and two rural colleges (81 full-time faculty) were selected from a stratified random sample based on geographical campus location. The criteria for selecting full-time faculty were based upon the number of working hours (40), teaching load (at least one class), and assignment to a specific academic

department. Those faculty who responded to questions regarding their satisfaction with role functions were all full time members of the professoriate. This was a critical factor. Consequently, part-time professors, administrators, and other individuals who had unique appointments were eliminated (See Table 1).

Table 1

Faculty Characteristics (N=234)

Institution	N	%
IP Barquisimeto	30	12.82
IP Caracas	65	27.77
IP Macaro	41	13.12
IP Maracay	19	8.12
IP Maturin	29	12.39
IP Rubio	37	16.81
IP Siso Martinez	13	3.14

These criteria were determined as part of an earlier field test in which faculty were asked to respond to a variety of items reflecting of their feelings about activities, actions, conditions, and or functions of the academic life. In the final process of data collection, faculty were personally given a cover letter, the FSQ, and a preaddressed return envelope. Eighty-eight percent of the selected sample responded to the survey, and 12% (n=27) did not return the FSQ.

The reliability test (Cronbach alpha coefficient) indicated that the variable of teaching satisfaction alpha coefficient was .85; research satisfaction alpha coefficient was .80; and service satisfaction was .85 (See Table 2).

Table 2

Field Test Report

		Measures		
		Teaching	Research	Service
Field I (N=30)	r= .85		r= .80	r= .85
Field II (N=207)	r= .76		r= .86	r= .83

The evidence of sufficient reliability of the measures was established; therefore, no changes in the instrument or procedure were made on the basis of the field test. In addition, the item-total correlation among items was positive reinforcing the viability of the FSQ.

Results

A total of 107 (51.7%) males and 100 (48.3%) females full-time faculty were compared in terms of their mean satisfaction scores for teaching, research,

and service role functions. A two-tailed t-test for independent means (Hinkle et. al, 1989) was used to determine whether the degree of women faculty's satisfaction with their role functions differed from a comparable group of full-time men faculty. In testing the null hypotheses of no differences between both groups, the assumptions of independent samples and homogeneity of variance were considered. Information relevant to the planned comparisons (means, standard deviations, and sample sizes) is shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics of Gender Satisfaction

	Gender			
	Male (N=107)		Female (N=100)	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Teaching	39.20	5.46	39.38	6.07
Research	21.28	6.70	21.12	6.14
Service	22.97	6.42	22.91	6.45

Three hypotheses stating differences between male and female full-time faculty were tested against the null hypotheses of no differences in satisfaction with the role functions of teaching, research, and service. In

order to hold the overall Type I error rate, each comparison was made using a .05 alpha level.

Teaching satisfaction for female faculty did not differ from male faculty satisfaction, $t = -.22$, $p > .05$. In addition, research satisfaction differences between groups were also found not significant, $t = .19$, $p > .05$. In respect to service satisfaction in female faculty, no differences were detected as compared to male full-time faculty, $t = .07$, $p > .05$. In these three cases, it was hypothesized that female subjects would be as satisfied as male individuals in performing their role functions of teaching, research, and service. However, a two-tailed t-test showed no difference in gender satisfaction with their academic role practices. Thus, the null hypotheses 1, 2, and 3 were supported. Table 4 summarizes the t-test data.

Table 4

t-test Summary Data

Role Function	t-test obs.	t-testcv	2-tail p
Teaching	-.22	1.96	.82
Research	.19	1.96	.84
Service	.07	1.96	.94
<u>$p > .05$</u>			

The observed value of t (teaching $t=.22$; research $t=.19$; and service $t=.07$) did not exceed t_{cv} (1.96 in each function); therefore, the argument of differences between male and female full-time faculty professors regarding their role functions were not corroborated.

Discussion

The findings reported here did not support hypotheses 1, 2, and 3 which predicted differences between full-time female and male professors. More specifically, teaching, research, and service do not appear to influence any satisfaction differences felt by faculty. Indeed, female and male professors have not perceived satisfaction differences with their role in a varying manner in academia.

It has long been believed that female and male faculty hold different perceptions toward teaching. It has been the belief that teaching is seen as a unique process in the educational academic arena which would usually be categorized and even attached to a female function. Women and men professors, as revealed in this research, are equally involved in the same role.

Female and male academicians respond to their satisfaction levels identically. However, while using the academic role functions as variables it is possible to obtain diverse opinions on what each function means to each gender. Perhaps the unlimited and undefined boundaries between teaching, research, and service may have misled these perceptions.

In the dynamic of higher education the role functions have acquired different levels of importance. Fortunately, the paradigm of gender differences is not a matter of concern in this regard. Regardless sex, faculty have posited their efforts in surviving periods of severe budgetary restrictions, social requests, and curriculum demands. However, these circumstances would strengthen one role function emerging over the other.

Much has been said about gender differences in education, but very little has been explained about how male and female faculty approach their roles in the academic organizations. This can be a good subject of research for the future.

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